

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-10

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R 311430Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3057

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 7242

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, EC

SUBJECT: CEOSL SPLITS; VILLACRES APPARENTLY ON THE ROPES

1. SUMMARY: AFTER TWO POSTPONEMENTS, SIXTH CEOSL CONGRESS WAS HELD IN MANTA OCTOBER 26 AND 27. RESULT WAS LONG-ANTICIPATED DIVISION OF CEOSL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO ORGANIZATIONS CLAIMING BE LEGITIMATE CEOSL. QUITO HEAD-QUARTERS OF LABOR CONFEDERATION IN HANDS OF GROUP LED BY JOSE CHAVEZ. END SUMMARY.

2. CEOSL MANTA CONGRESS RESULTED IN SPLIT SHORTLY AFTER QUALIFICATION OF DELEGATES MORNING OF OCTOBER 26. REVISION OF CREDENTIALS WAS IN HANDS OF TWO COHORTS OF OUTGOING CEOSL SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS VILLACRES WHO DISQUALIFIED CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF DELEGATES ALLIED WITH VILLACRES' OPPONENT JOSE CHAVEZ, LEADER OF POWERFUL PICHINCHA (QUITO) PROVINCIAL FEDERATION. ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES, CHAVEZ' REQUEST FOR FORMATION OF CONGRESS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW CREDENTIALS WAS IGNORED BY VILLACRES WHO, WITH CLAQUE OF WOMEN WORKERS FROM MANTA AND HIS OWN SUPPORTERS, ATTEMPTED TO MOVE ON TO NEXT AGENDA ITEM, ASSERTING OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF CONGRESS, BUT WITHOUT VOTE. CHAVEZ GROUP PROTESTED AND WHEN CHAIR REFUSED ACCEDE WITHDREW WITH WHAT CHAVEZ CLAIMS WAS MAJORITY OF

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DELEGATES TO HOLD OWN CONGRESS IN NEARBY CHAUFFERS'S

UNION HALL.

3. FORMAL INAUGURATION OF CONGRESS WENT OFF PEACEABLY NIGHT OF OCTOBER 26 WITH LARGE NUMBER OF CHAVEZ DELEGATES IN ATTENDANCE. SUNDAY, HOWEVER, THERE WAS FIGHT AT ORIGINAL CONGRESS SITE WHEN CHAVEZ GROUP WAS REFUSED REFUND OF FUNDS THEY HAD MADE AVAILABLE TO PAY HOTEL BILLS. MANTA POLICE INTERVENED AND FORCED VILLACRES GROUP TO PAY HOTEL BILLS, BUT ONLY AFTER CONGRESS PRESIDENT VICENTE FRANCO AND ONE OR TWO OTHERS HAD BEEN BEATEN TO UNCONSCIOUSNESS AND TAKEN TO HOSPITAL.

4. CHAVEZ' PEOPLE HAD IN MEANTIME TAKEN OVER CEOSL HEADQUARTERS IN QUITO AND WHEN VILLACRES RETURNED TO CITY HE WAS CONFRONTED WITH LOSS OF OPERATING BASE AND A DETERMINED CHAVEZ VOWING NOT TO LEAVE CEOSL HEAD-QUARTERS ALIVE. VILLACRES' APPEALS TO GOVERNMENT AND POLICE HAVE BEEN IGNORED THUS FAR EVEN THOUGH GOE GAVE SUCRE 40,000 (\$1,600.00) TO VILLACRES TO HELP COVER CONGRESS EXPENSES. CHAVEZ CLAIMS CEOSL BANK ACCOUNTS, OF WHICH HE HAS TAKEN POSSESSION, ARE EMPTY AND WONDERS WHERE FUNDS TO COVER CHECKS WRITTEN BY VILLACRES' TREASURER IN MANTA COULD BE.

5. COMMENT: CHAVEZ APPEARS TO HAVE DEALT CAREFULLY PLANNED AND POSSIBLY MORTAL BLOW TO VILLACRES WHO HAS NO SUPPORT IN QUITO. MINISTRY OF LABOR OFFICIALS TELL US THEY HAVE NO PLANS INTERVENE IN MATTER THEY CONSIDER PURELY WORKER AFFAIR. CONSEQUENTLY VILLACRES, WHOSE SUPPORT IS IN THE PROVINCES AND NOT IN QUITO, FACES A TOUGH SITUATION WITH THE LOCALLY-POWERFUL CHAVEZ IN PHYSICAL CONTROL OF CEOSL HEADQUARTERS. CHAVEZ HAS INDICATED DESIRE COME TO TERMS WITH AUTHENTIC UNIONS WHICH REMAINED IN VILLACRES CAMP; COMING WEEKS WILL SHOW HOW SUCCESSFUL HE WILL BE. IN THE MEANTIME, ANY KIND OF JOB THAT WOULD REMOVE VILLACRES FROM LOCAL SCENE WOULD MAKE THIS PROCESS EASIER.
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